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EDU 402-Background Statement

I have spent seventeen of my twenty-two years in school. Throughout these seventeen years of being in school, I have lived in many places and gone to numerous schools, none were exactly alike. I have gone to schools that are very rural and others that are urban with wide ranges of socioeconomic statuses. Not only have I gotten to experience both ends of the spectrum when it comes to diversity, but my thoughts and values have changed tremendously, too, on education as a whole. I can recall times where I had little to no real care in the educational system, mostly for lack of knowledge. I have also thought very strongly one way, and then changed my mind to thinking very strongly in the complete opposite direction of my previous thought.

I can’t recall having too many opinions about the educational system or the business world on education, not until I got into college that is. To be honest I loathed school, with the exception of gym, health, psychology, and art, which are not required, but electives. That is how I have always been, throughout my schooling, even now, in college, I enjoy my health classes the most; it is, after all, my major, though. For the most part, I found middle and high school to be boring and mundane; I rarely wanted to be there. I remember quite a bit from elementary school, I enjoyed it quite a bit, however I loved grades K-2. Everything was so much fun and carefree. I learned how to read, write, and do math, and to this day I can still do all of that, I can’t remember most of the things I learned in my English, Math, or History classes. The older you get, the less fun education seems, except in college, I have found. I have some classes that are filled with fun and excitement, so much so that I cannot wait to go to them. That is how school should be.

There is such a difference in the way students are taught from elementary to middle and then middle to high school. Everything is so creative and interactive in elementary school. From K-2 the desks or tables were set up so it was four kids at a table. From third grade to fifth grade the desks were put in a “U” shape. In sixth grade we were in rows, but still had desks pushed together in pairs. In middle and high school most of my classes were in columns. As I said before, in elementary school, learning was fun. We did a variety of activities to help everyone learn. As the years went on, creativity seemed to be sucked out, things got less fun. In elementary school I was in GT programs for both Math and English. This meant I was pulled out of class during these periods. In high school I took one AP class. I could have taken more, but AP classes, for the most part, meant more work, busy work. I think if it was work I enjoyed doing, rather than busy work, I would have been more apt to actually take the AP courses. I don’t much like the idea of having to leave class to go to a separate class to do more advanced things. I don’t understand why we cannot just incorporate it into the class a student is already in. It makes it less awkward. Being the only one that gets pulled out of class everyday for math is sort of weird. Everyone in that class thinks so, which is awkward for the child being pulled out.

I feel as though the strategies that really worked for me in school were fun activities, hands-on activities, and assignments that I got to choose the topic or book of interest. What didn’t work for me, and what I still don’t understand, are book reports. Reading a story, that didn’t have much for me to relate to, but then trying to summarize and then describe how I related to it. It’s nearly impossible, especially without lying. In high school, I nearly failed a couple classes and neither the school nor the teachers did anything about it. They didn’t ask me what was going on or if my classes were too hard for me, which they weren’t, I just wasn’t interested. It’s not like I was a terrible student either, I got honors my Freshman year, and then two D’s and two A’s one semester of my Sophomore year, I would say that is a warning sign that something is not right. It was like no one really cared if I passed or not, they just ignored it. I was pretty good at all the core subjects, regardless of what my grades said. I just didn’t care for those core subjects; I loved Psychology and other electives. I think the most memorable teacher I have had would be Mr. Beaulieu. He was my teacher in third grade and fifth grade. He made learning so much fun. I remember learning about chemical reactions by making ice cream, it was pretty cool.

I really do think I sort of coasted through middle and high school, which kind of hurt me later on. I feel as though I can’t recall most historical events, dates of those events are even harder for me to remember. I don’t remember learning anything useful in English or Math (in middle and high school). I’m sure some people received a great education, and although I received that same education, I don’t feel as though I gained much knowledge. I hope I am not that teacher, I hope that isn’t my class, the one that students don’t really remember anything from. Sometimes that is my fear, though.

With all that being said, I hope I can learn and grow from my own background so I can be a successful teacher. By successful, I mean that I hope my students cannot wait to come to my class and don’t want to leave when the bell rings. I hope they learn many useful life skills that they can use every day. I hope that my students not only learn, but retain and re-teach the knowledge I present them with. I hope this for all of my students, not just some, not most, but all. I think that is half the work of being a superior teacher. That desire paired with the catering to the needs of students makes the superior teacher. Hopefully, my background will help me. I feel very comfortable with diversity on all levels. I will also make sure the needs of all my students are met, to the best of my ability that is. If I see a student who is getting Ds, I will see that as a red flag, regardless of their previous grades. All students are capable of getting As.

When asked *why be a teacher*, many people reply “well, my parents are both teachers, it’s all I know,” or “I have wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember.” Well, no one in my family is a teacher and I can say that I did not want to be a teacher for as long as I can remember. As I previously stated, I, for the most part, loathed school. Every ounce of me despised going to school and I think there were times where I thought that teachers were vile, evil beings with the goal of making me completely miserable. I didn’t truly want to be a teacher until I came to college. I saw how unhealthy the people around me were, and I saw how unhealthy I was becoming. I have always liked health, but college is where I really figured out how important health is to everyday life. I also realized how uneducated I and most of the population are when it comes to being a truly healthy individual. I want to be the change that helps to create a healthier nation. Upon taking Practicum I learned so many useful skills that made it very easy for me to vow that I would never be like the teachers I dreaded seeing every day. I chose to be a teacher so I could make a difference.

I don’t think that I am a superior teacher yet, but I think that with the experiences I have had, I have the knowledge and tools to become a superior teacher. Like I said before, I think it takes desire and passion in what you do combined with individualized curricula to become the superior teacher. Being totally passionate about your concentration and having the desire to spread that passion is the first step. Learning how to cater to students by using multiple strategies that target each individual’s multiple intelligence and learning style. I plan to incorporate many strategies that cater to the multiple intelligences and learning styles. I am already very passionate about health and I do have a strong desire to spread that passion. Health is so important to our survival from the moment we are conceived until the day we die.

Something I hope to gain by being a teacher would probably be seeing that I am making a change in my students’ lives. It will feel very nice to know that I am making a difference and that I am appreciated. I hope that I can contribute to a movement to a healthier state and nation. I hope I can also promote change in the educational system, for example, I think we eliminate the labels on some classes, like AP, they place a stigma on the students. I think we should also have standards based education opposed to grades. I believe that every student is capable of passing every class. I want to stress the fact to the department of education that everyone is capable of learning, mastering, and showing that mastery. We just need to give them the tools to do so, we need to understand each student on an individual level. We need to know who our students are and how they learn, then, they can be truly successful.

My fears are that I will be one in a million who feels this way. That I will be fighting a battle I will always lose when it comes to having individual lesson plans for each student. Sometimes, I also fear that I may not be the teacher I want to be and that I may turn into one of the teachers I swore I would never be like. I sometimes think it is okay to have those fears, though, because it tells me that I care very much about this career path. I just need to know that I should pay little mind to that fear and be confident.